

ARNOLD ARBORETUM

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Plums and Apricots. Many Plum-trees are covered this year with flowers and flower-buds. The earliest of them to flower is probably a plant of *Prunus salicina*, better known as *Prunus triflora*, which was received a few years ago from a German Nursery under the name of *Prunus kurdica*, a species from central Asia with small black fruit, first known by a tree cultivated in Vienna. The German plant flowers a few days earlier than the plants of *P. salicina* raised from seeds collected by Wilson in western China, and differs from them in the lighter-colored bark of the stem and branches. It bears large yellow fruit slightly tinged with red, with thick succulent flesh of excellent quality, and seems worth the attention of pomologists in the northern states. *Prunus salicina*, which is the most important Plum-tree of eastern Asia, is best known as the origin of the so-called Japanese Plums now largely cultivated in the United States. The plants of *P. salicina* raised from Wilson's seeds are blooming well this year, and although the flowers of these trees are only about three-quarters of an inch in diameter they are so abundant that, apart from the value of their fruit, they are well worth a place in the garden for their flowers.

***Prunus Simonii*.** This native of Northern China is blooming more abundantly this year than usual. It is conspicuous among Plum trees for the erect-growing branches which form a narrow pyramidal head. It produces red sweet fruit of fair quality, and under the name of the Apricot Plum it has been much propagated by American pomologists and largely grown in this country, especially in the Pacific States.

This tree is hardy but in the Arboretum it has been short-lived, and in this part of the country is only worth growing as a curiosity.

Prunus nigra. Among American Plums in the Arboretum collection the so-called Canada Plum, *Prunus nigra*, is the earliest to bloom. It is a native of the northern border of the United States from New Brunswick westward, and is distinguished from the more southern *Prunus americana* by its larger and earlier flowers, the blunt teeth of the leaves and by the darker and closer bark. The flowers turn pink as they fade. The Canada Plum has produced some excellent seedling forms of garden Plums like Cheney, Itasca, Aitkin and Oxford which are esteemed and largely grown by pomologists. The flowers of the Canadian Plum will soon be followed by those of *Prunus americana*, of the blue-fruited *P. alleghaniensis*, a native of southern Connecticut and western Pennsylvania, an interesting species of considerable ornamental value, of *Prunus Watsonii*, the little Sand Plum of Kansas and Oklahoma, of *Prunus Munsoniana* of the Kansas to Texas region, the wild form of the Wild Goose and many other varieties cultivated for their fruit, and of *Prunus hortulana*, a native of the region from southern Illinois to southern Missouri and Oklahoma. This is perhaps the handsomest of the American Plum trees and one of the last to flower. In cultivation it is a round-topped tree with wide-spreading branches. The flowers are small, often not more than half of an inch in diameter, and open before the leaves which are narrow, long-pointed and lustrous. The globose fruit is scarlet, very lustrous, and looks like a large cherry. Forms of this tree like Golden Beauty, Kanawha, Wayland and Cumberland, are grown and distributed by nurserymen as fruit trees; but without regard to the edible value of its fruit *Prunus hortulana* is worth a place in every northern garden for its beauty of habit, foliage and fruit. The Plum trees are planted at the entrance to the Shrub Collection from the Meadow Road, and there is a supplementary collection of young plants with many American species and varieties near the top of Peter's Hill.

Prunus dasycarpa. In the Arboretum this tree has been for many springs covered with its large showy flowers. This is the Purple or Black Apricot, so-called on account of the dull purple color of the fruit. It is a small tree with a short trunk covered with dark bark, and wide-spreading branches. A native of eastern Siberia or Manchuria, this Apricot is very hardy and is well worth cultivating in the northern states as a flowering plant, for the fruit, which has rarely ripened in the Arboretum, has little value in comparison with that of the common Apricot.

A Japanese Apricot under the name of "Mikado," a form of the common Apricot (*Prunus Armeniaca*), has been grown in the Arboretum for several years where it makes a small tree with erect branches and, flowering freely every spring, has proved here one of the handsomest and most satisfactory plants of its class.

Prunus triloba. Among the flowers of early spring few are more lovely than those of this small Almond from northern China which, in spite of the fact that it has flowered in the Arboretum every spring for the last twenty years, is still very little known, although the form with double flowers (var. *plena*) is a common garden plant in this country and is often successfully forced under glass for winter bloom. The single-flowered plant should be better known. It is a tall shrub of rather open irregular habit of growth. The flowers, which are pure clear pink in color, are produced every year in profusion, and among the shrubs introduced into cultivation by the Arboretum in the last thirty years none excel the single-flowered form of *P. triloba* in the beauty of their flowers. This shrub can be seen on the right-hand side of Forest Hills Road not far below the entrance. It can also be seen with *Prunus tomentosa* by the path leading from the Meadow Road through the woods into the Shrub Collection.

Early Lilacs. The earliest Lilacs to bloom here, the white-flowered *Syringa affinis*, and its variety with mauve-colored flowers (var. *Giraldii*), and *S. Meyeri*, are rapidly opening their flower-buds. *S. affinis* and its variety are tall shrubs of open habit and, except in their flowers, have no decorative value. The individual flowers are small but are borne in large loose clusters, and are exceedingly and pleasantly fragrant. *S. affinis* is not known as a wild plant but is the common and perhaps the only Lilac cultivated in Peking, where it has been largely used in the Imperial and Mandarin gardens. The variety is a wild plant in the region southwest of Peking. *S. Meyeri* was found in a Chinese garden by the traveller whose name it bears, and is not known as a wild plant. As it grows in the Arboretum it is a shrub beginning to flower when not more than a foot high, and covering itself with small compact clusters of small dark purple very fragrant flowers. This interesting addition to the genus *Syringa* will probably never become a popular garden plant, although it may prove useful to the hybridizer.

The Norway Maple. Only a few of the important trees of western Europe really succeed in eastern North America, although for more than a century they received more attention at the hands of American planters than our native species. There are, of course, some exceptions to this general statement. The forms of the White and of the Fragile Willow, some of the Poplars, the Beech, the Lindens, the Elms, the Birches and the Norway Maple are as much at home in southern New England and the middle states as they are in England, and probably grow here more rapidly than they do in their native countries where there is smaller although more regularly distributed rainfall and less summer heat. None of the European trees have been more generally planted in the eastern states during the last fifty years than one of the Maples (*Acer platanoides*), the so-called Norway Maple, although it is not an exclusively Scandinavian tree, but is widely spread over the continent and reaches the Caucasus. The Norway Maple has

a round-topped head and is sometimes one hundred feet high, although specimens of this size have not been produced in America. It has comparatively smooth bark, smooth pale branches, and lustrous leaves with pointed lobes which in the autumn turn clear bright yellow. The flowers, which open before the leaves, are greenish yellow, and are arranged in compact round clusters. The fruit, which is also in clusters, is smooth with horizontally spreading wings. This tree is now in bloom, and among the trees of large size which can grow in this climate only the Red Maple and some of the Willows are more conspicuous in early spring. It is not surprising that this tree has been such a favorite in the United States for it is handsome throughout the year; it bears well the hard conditions of city life, and grows better at the seashore than most of the native trees. The seedlings of few trees have shown a greater tendency to variation, and many of the varieties of the Norway Maple have been largely propagated by European nurserymen. There are a dozen of the most distinct of these varieties in the Arboretum collection, and among them are some handsome plants. The variety *columnare* is one of the best of the trees with fastigiate branches although it is broader and less columnar than the form of the Sugar Maple with erect growing branches (*Acer saccharum*, var. *monumentale*). One of the handsomest of dwarf trees is the variety *globosum*, a round-topped bush branching from the ground. There is a good specimen in the Arboretum collection planted in 1888, and now about eight feet high, and broader than tall. Forms of this tree with deeply divided leaves are var. *dissecta* and var. *cucullata*, the Eagle Claw Maple. These are small trees which are more curious than beautiful. The most popular of the varieties of the Norway Maple is the variety *Schwedleri*. Early in the season this tree has bright red leaves which before summer are dark dull green. The color of the spring leaves attracts nurserymen, and this tree has been planted largely in the neighborhood of eastern cities. The dull unnatural color of the mature leaves makes this, however, an undesirable tree for general planting. More attractive is the variety *Stollii* with large three-lobed leaves, purple as they unfold but later dark green. This is one of the most distinct of all the forms of the Norway Maple in the Arboretum collection.

The Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) is also in bloom and, although the flowers do not make so much show as those of the Norway Maple, as they are paler in color and arranged in drooping clusters, they are more delicate and better worth close inspection by the lovers of beautiful flowers.

An illustrated guide to the Arboretum containing a map showing the position of the different groups of plants has been published. It will be found useful to persons unfamiliar with the Arboretum. Copies of this guide can be obtained at the Administration Building in the Arboretum, from the Secretary of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, 300 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, from The Houghton, Mifflin Company, 4 Park Street, Boston, and at the office of the Harvard Alumni Bulletin, 18 Plympton Street, Cambridge. Price, 30 cents.